

CLAIMS

1. In a computer system including a first field-programmable unit including first field-programmable unit (FPU) code, a computer-implemented method comprising steps of:

- (A) determining whether the first FPU code is compatible with the computer system; and
- (B) if the first FPU code is determined not to be compatible with the computer system, notifying a user of the computer system of the incompatibility.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the computer system further comprises a plurality of field-programmable units including a corresponding plurality of FPU codes, and wherein the step (A) comprises a step of:

- (A) (1) determining whether the first FPU code is compatible with the plurality of FPU codes.

3. The method of claim 2, wherein the computer system further comprises a plurality of field-replaceable units, and wherein the step (A) further comprises a step of:

- (A) (2) determining whether the first FPU code is compatible with the plurality of field-replaceable units.

4. The method of claim 2, wherein the computer system further comprises a revision compatibility descriptor identifying a plurality of compatible combinations of field-programmable unit codes, and wherein the step (A)(1) comprises a step of determining that the first FPU code is compatible with the plurality of FPU codes if a combination of the first FPU code and the plurality of FPU codes is among the plurality of compatible combinations of field-programmable unit codes identified by the revision compatibility descriptor.

5. The method of claim 2, wherein the computer system further comprises a plurality of field-replaceable units and a revision compatibility descriptor identifying a plurality of compatible combinations of field-programmable unit codes and field-replaceable units, and wherein the step (A) comprises a step of determining that the first FPU code is compatible with the computer system if a combination of the first FPU code, the plurality of FPU codes, and the plurality of field-replaceable units is among the plurality of combination combinations of field-programmable unit codes and field-replaceable units identified by the revision compatibility descriptor.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein the first field-programmable unit comprises a field-replaceable unit.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein the step (A) is performed in response to installation of the first field-programmable unit in the computer system.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein the step (B) comprises a step of:

- (B) (1) providing the user with information descriptive of second FPU code that is suitable for storage in the first field-programmable unit and that is compatible with the computer system.

9. The method of claim 8, wherein the step (A) is performed in response to replacement of a second field-programmable unit with the first field-programmable unit, and wherein the second field-programmable unit includes the second FPU code.

10. The method of claim 8, and wherein the step (B) (1) comprises steps of:

- (B) (1) (a) identifying a compatible combination of field-programmable unit codes previously installed in the computer system;
- (B) (1) (b) identifying, in the identified combination of previously-installed field-programmable unit codes, an identifier of FPU code suitable for installation in the first field-programmable unit; and
- (B) (1) (c) providing the user with information descriptive of the FPU code identified by the identifier.

11. The method of claim 8, wherein the computer system further comprises a plurality of FPU's including a corresponding plurality of FPU codes, and a revision compatibility descriptor identifying a plurality of combinations of compatible field-programmable unit codes, and wherein the step (B)(1) comprises steps of:

- (B)(1)(a) identifying, in the revision compatibility descriptor, a record describing the plurality of FPU codes;
- (B)(1)(b) identifying, in the identified record, a code identifier identifying FPU code suitable for use in the first field-programmable unit; and
- (B)(1)(c) providing the user with information descriptive of the FPU code identified by the code identifier.

12. In a computer system including a first field-programmable unit including first field-programmable unit (FPU) code, an apparatus comprising:

determination means for determining whether the first FPU code is compatible with the computer system; and

notification means for notifying a user of the computer system that the first FPU code is not compatible with the computer system if the determination means determines that the first FPU code is not compatible with the computer system.

13. The apparatus of claim 12, wherein the computer system further comprises a plurality of field-programmable units including a corresponding plurality of FPU codes, and wherein the determination means comprises:

means for determining whether the first FPU code is compatible with the plurality of FPU codes.

14. The apparatus of claim 13, wherein the computer system further comprises a plurality of field-replaceable units, and wherein the determination means further comprises:

means for determining whether the first FPU code is compatible with the plurality of field-replaceable units.

15. The apparatus of claim 13, further comprising a revision compatibility descriptor identifying a plurality of compatible combinations of field-programmable unit codes, and wherein the determination means comprises means for determining that the first FPU code is compatible with the plurality of FPU codes if a combination of the first FPU code and the plurality of FPU codes is among the plurality of compatible combinations of field-programmable unit codes identified by the revision compatibility descriptor.

16. The apparatus of claim 13, wherein the computer system further comprises a plurality of field-replaceable units, wherein the apparatus further comprises a revision compatibility descriptor identifying a plurality of compatible combinations of field-programmable unit codes and field-replaceable units, and wherein the determination means comprises means for determining that the first FPU code is compatible with the computer system if a combination of the first FPU code, the plurality of FPU codes, and the plurality of field-replaceable units is among the plurality of combination combinations of field-programmable unit codes and field-replaceable units identified by the revision compatibility descriptor.

17. The apparatus of claim 2, wherein the notification means comprises means for providing the user with information descriptive of second FPU code that is suitable for storage in the first field-programmable unit and that is compatible with the computer system.

18. A storage medium readable by a computer in a computer system including a first field-programmable unit, the first field-programmable unit including first field-programmable unit (FPU) code, the storage medium tangibly embodying program instructions executable by the computer to perform method steps of:

- (A) determining whether the first FPU code is compatible with the computer system; and
- (B) if the first FPU code is determined not to be compatible with the computer system, notifying a user of the computer system of the incompatibility.

19. The storage medium of claim 18, wherein the computer system further comprises a plurality of field-programmable units including a corresponding plurality of FPU codes, and wherein the step (A) comprises a step of:

- (A) (1) determining whether the first FPU code is compatible with the plurality of FPU codes.

20. The storage medium of claim 19, wherein the computer system further comprises a plurality of field-replaceable units, and wherein the step (A) further comprises a step of:

- (A) (2) determining whether the first FPU code is compatible with the plurality of field-replaceable units.

21. The storage medium of claim 19, wherein the computer system further comprises a revision compatibility descriptor identifying a plurality of compatible combinations of field-programmable unit codes, and wherein the step (A) (1) comprises a step of determining that the first FPU code is compatible with the plurality of FPU codes if a combination of the first FPU code and the plurality of FPU codes is among the plurality of compatible combinations of field-programmable unit codes identified by the revision compatibility descriptor.

22. The storage medium of claim 19, wherein the computer system further comprises a plurality of field-replaceable units and a revision compatibility descriptor identifying a plurality of compatible combinations of field-programmable unit codes and field-replaceable units, and wherein the step (A) comprises a step of determining that the first FPU code is compatible with the computer system if a combination of the first FPU code, the plurality of FPU codes, and the plurality of field-replaceable units is among the plurality of combination combinations of field-programmable unit codes and field-replaceable units identified by the revision compatibility descriptor.

23. The storage medium of claim 18, wherein the first field-programmable unit comprises a field-replaceable unit.

24. A computer system comprising:
a first field-programmable unit (FPU) including first FPU code;
a compatibility verifier coupled to the first FPU and operable to determine whether the first FPU code is compatible with the computer system, and to notify a user of the computer system of the incompatibility if the first FPU code is determined not to be compatible with the computer system.

25. The computer system of claim 24, further comprising a plurality of field-programmable units including a corresponding plurality of FPU codes, and wherein the compatibility verifier is further operable to determine whether the first FPU code is compatible with the plurality of FPU codes.

26. The computer system of claim 25, further comprising a plurality of field-replaceable units, and wherein the compatibility verifier is further operable to determine whether the first FPU code is compatible with the plurality of field-replaceable units.

27. The computer system of claim 25, further comprising a revision compatibility descriptor identifying a plurality of compatible combinations of field-programmable unit codes, and wherein the compatibility verifier is operable to determine that the first FPU code is compatible with the plurality of FPU codes if a combination of the first FPU code and the plurality of FPU codes is among the plurality of compatible combinations of field-programmable unit codes identified by the revision compatibility descriptor.

28. The computer system of claim 25, further comprising a plurality of field-replaceable units and a revision compatibility descriptor identifying a plurality of compatible combinations of field-programmable unit codes and field-replaceable units, and wherein the compatibility verifier is operable to determine that the first FPU code is compatible with the computer system if a combination of the first FPU code, the plurality of FPU codes, and the plurality of field-replaceable units is among the plurality of combination combinations of field-programmable unit codes and field-replaceable units identified by the revision compatibility descriptor.

29. The computer system of claim 24, wherein the first field-programmable unit comprises a field-replaceable unit.

30. In a computer system including a first field-programmable unit including first FPU code and a second field-programmable unit including second FPU code, a computer-implemented method comprising steps of:

- (A) after replacement of the second field-programmable unit by the first field-programmable unit, determining whether the first FPU code is different from the second FPU code; and
- (B) notifying a user of the computer system that the first field-programmable unit is incompatible with the computer system if it is determined that the first FPU code is different from the second FPU code.

31. The method of claim 30, wherein the first field-programmable unit comprises a field-replaceable unit.

32. The method of claim 30, wherein the step (B) comprises a step of:

- (B) (1) providing the user with information descriptive of third FPU code that is suitable for storage in the first field-programmable unit and that is compatible with the computer system.

33. The method of claim 32, wherein the third FPU code comprises the second FPU code.

34. The method of claim 32, wherein the step (B) (1) comprises steps of:

- (B) (1) (a) identifying a combination of compatible field-programmable unit codes previously installed in the computer system;
- (B) (1) (b) identifying, in the identified combination of previously-installed field-programmable unit codes, an identifier of the second FPU code; and
- (B) (1) (c) providing the user with information descriptive of the second FPU code.

35. In a computer system including a first field-programmable unit including first FPU code and a second field-programmable unit including second FPU code, an apparatus comprising:

determination means for determining, after replacement of the second field-programmable unit by the first field-programmable unit, whether the first FPU code is different from the second FPU code; and

notification means for notifying a user of the computer system that the first field-programmable unit is incompatible with the computer system if it is determined that the first FPU code is different from the second FPU code.

36. The apparatus of claim 35, wherein the notification means comprises information provision means for providing the user with information descriptive of third FPU code that is suitable for storage in the first field-programmable unit and that is compatible with the computer system.

37. The apparatus of claim 24, wherein the third FPU code comprises the second FPU code.

38. The apparatus of claim 36, wherein the information provision means comprises:

means for identifying a combination of compatible field-programmable unit codes previously installed in the computer system;

means for identifying, in the identified combination of previously-installed field-programmable unit codes, an identifier of the second FPU code; and

means for providing the user with information descriptive of the second FPU code.

39. A storage medium readable by a computer in a computer system including a first field-programmable unit (FPU) and a second FPU, the first FPU including first FPU code, the second FPU including second FPU code, the storage medium tangibly embodying program instructions executable by the computer to perform method steps of:

- (A) after replacement of the second FPU by the first FPU, determining whether the first FPU code is different from the second FPU code; and
- (B) notifying a user of the computer system that the first FPU is incompatible with the computer system if it is determined that the first FPU code is different from the second FPU code.

40. The storage medium of claim 39, wherein the first FPU comprises a field-replaceable unit.

41. The storage medium of claim 39, wherein the step (B) comprises a step of:

(B) (1) providing the user with information descriptive of third FPU code that is suitable for storage in the first FPU and that is compatible with the computer system.

42. A computer system comprising:

a first field-programmable unit (FPU) comprising first FPU code;

a second FPU comprising second FPU code; and

a compatibility verifier coupled to the first FPU, the compatibility verifier being operable to determine whether the first FPU code is different from the second FPU code and, if the first FPU code is determined to be different from the second FPU code, to notify a user of the computer system that the first FPU code is incompatible with the computer system.

43. The computer system of claim 42, wherein the first FPU comprises a field-replaceable unit.

44. The computer system of claim 42, wherein the compatibility verifier is operable to provide the user with information descriptive of third FPU code that is suitable for storage in the first FPU and that is compatible with the computer system.

45. In a computer system including a first field-programmable unit including first FPU code, a computer-implemented method comprising steps of:

- (A) determining whether the first FPU code is compatible with the computer system;
- (B) if the first FPU code is determined not to be compatible with the computer system, identifying second FPU code that is compatible with the computer system and suitable for installation in the first field-programmable unit; and
- (C) installing the second FPU code in the first field-programmable unit.

46. The method of claim 45, wherein the computer system further comprises a plurality of field-programmable units including a corresponding plurality of FPU codes, and wherein the step (A) comprises a step of:

- (A) (1) determining whether the first FPU code is compatible with the plurality of FPU codes.

47. The method of claim 46, wherein the computer system further comprises a plurality of field-replaceable units, and wherein the step (A) further comprises a step of:

- (A) (2) determining whether the first FPU code is compatible with the plurality of field-replaceable units.

48. The method of claim 46, wherein the computer system further comprises a revision compatibility descriptor identifying a plurality of compatible combinations of FPU codes, and wherein the step (A) (1) comprises a step of determining that the first FPU code is compatible with the plurality of FPU codes if a combination of the first FPU code and the plurality of FPU codes is among the plurality of compatible combinations of FPU identified by the revision compatibility descriptor.

49. The method of claim 46, wherein the computer system further comprises a plurality of field-replaceable units and a revision compatibility descriptor identifying a plurality of compatible combinations of field-programmable unit codes and field-replaceable units, and wherein the step (A) comprises a step of determining that the first FPU code is compatible with the computer system if a combination of the first FPU code, the plurality of FPU codes, and the plurality of field-replaceable units is among the plurality of combination combinations of FPU codes and field-replaceable units identified by the revision compatibility descriptor.

50. The method of claim 45, wherein the first field-programmable unit comprises a field-replaceable unit.

51. The method of claim 45, wherein the step (A) is performed in response to installation of the first field-programmable unit in the computer system.

52. In a computer system including a first field-programmable unit including first FPU code, an apparatus comprising:

determination means for determining whether the first FPU code is compatible with the computer system;

identification means for identifying second FPU code that is compatible with the computer system and suitable for installation in the first field-programmable unit if the first FPU code is determined not to be compatible with the computer system; and

installation means for installing the second FPU code in the first field-programmable unit.

53. The apparatus of claim 52, wherein the computer system further comprises a plurality of field-programmable units including a corresponding plurality of FPU codes, and wherein the determination means comprises:

means for determining whether the first FPU code is compatible with the plurality of FPU codes.

54. The apparatus of claim 53, wherein the computer system further comprises a plurality of field-replaceable units, and wherein the determination means further comprises:

means for determining whether the first FPU code is compatible with the plurality of field-replaceable units.

55. The apparatus of claim 53, wherein the computer system further comprises a revision compatibility descriptor identifying a plurality of compatible combinations of FPU codes, and wherein the determination means comprises means for determining that the first FPU code is compatible with the plurality of FPU codes if a combination of the first FPU code and the plurality of FPU codes is among the plurality of compatible combinations of FPU identified by the revision compatibility descriptor.

56. The apparatus of claim 53, wherein the computer system further comprises a plurality of field-replaceable units and a revision compatibility descriptor identifying a plurality of compatible combinations of field-programmable unit codes and field-replaceable units, and wherein the determination means comprises means for determining that the first FPU code is compatible with the computer system if a combination of the first FPU code, the plurality of FPU codes, and the plurality of field-replaceable units is among the plurality of combination combinations of FPU codes and field-replaceable units identified by the revision compatibility descriptor.

57. A storage medium readable by a computer in a computer system including a first field-programmable unit (FPU) including first FPU code, the storage medium tangibly embodying program instructions executable by the computer to perform method steps of:

- (A) determining whether the first FPU code is compatible with the computer system;
- (B) if the first FPU code is determined not to be compatible with the computer system, identifying second FPU code that is compatible with the computer system and suitable for installation in the first field-programmable unit; and
- (C) installing the second FPU code in the first field-programmable unit.

58. The storage medium of claim 57, wherein the computer system further comprises a plurality of field-programmable units including a corresponding plurality of FPU codes, and wherein the step (A) comprises a step of:

- (A) (1) determining whether the first FPU code is compatible with the plurality of FPU codes.

59. The storage medium of claim 58, wherein the computer system further comprises a plurality of field-replaceable units, and wherein the step (A) further comprises a step of:

- (A) (2) determining whether the first FPU code is compatible with the plurality of field-replaceable units.

60. The storage medium of claim 58, wherein the computer system further comprises a revision compatibility descriptor identifying a plurality of compatible combinations of FPU codes, and wherein the step (A) (1) comprises a step of determining that the first FPU code is compatible with the plurality of FPU codes if a combination of the first FPU code and the plurality of FPU codes is among the plurality of compatible combinations of FPU identified by the revision compatibility descriptor.

61. The storage medium of claim 58, wherein the computer system further comprises a plurality of field-replaceable units and a revision compatibility descriptor identifying a plurality of compatible combinations of field-programmable unit codes and field-replaceable units, and wherein the step (A) comprises a step of determining that the first FPU code is compatible with the computer system if a combination of the first FPU code, the plurality of FPU codes, and the plurality of field-replaceable units is among the plurality of combination combinations of FPU codes and field-replaceable units identified by the revision compatibility descriptor.

62. A computer system comprising:
a first field-programmable unit (FPU) including first FPU code;
a compatibility verifier coupled to the first FPU and operable to determine whether the first FPU code is compatible with the computer system and, if the first FPU code is determined not to be compatible with the computer system, to identify second FPU code that is compatible with the computer system and suitable for installation in the first field-programmable unit; and
a code installer coupled to the first FPU and operable to install the second FPU code in the first field-programmable unit.

63. The computer system of claim 62, further comprising a plurality of FPUs including a corresponding plurality of FPU codes, and wherein the compatibility verifier is operable to determine whether the first FPU code is compatible with the plurality of FPU codes.

64. The computer system of claim 63, further comprising a plurality of field-replaceable units, and wherein the compatibility verifier is operable to determine whether the first FPU code is compatible with the plurality of field-replaceable units.

65. The computer system of claim 63, further comprising a revision compatibility descriptor identifying a plurality of compatible combinations of FPU codes, and wherein the compatibility verifier is operable to determine that the first FPU code is compatible with the plurality of FPU codes if a combination of the first FPU code and the plurality of FPU codes is among the plurality of compatible combinations of FPU identified by the revision compatibility descriptor.

66. The computer system of claim 63, further comprising a plurality of field-replaceable units and a revision compatibility descriptor identifying a plurality of compatible combinations of field-programmable unit codes and field-replaceable units, and wherein the compatibility verifier is operable to determine that the first FPU code is compatible with the computer system if a combination of the first FPU code, the plurality of FPU codes, and the plurality of field-replaceable units is among the plurality of combination combinations of FPU codes and field-replaceable units identified by the revision compatibility descriptor.